COMPLIANCE COMPONENT

DEFINITION	
Name	Navigation
Description	Navigation refers to the method used to find information within a Web site. A Web site's navigation scheme and features should allow users to find and access information effectively and efficiently.
Rationale	Consistent and effective navigation design enables users to move around easily and find what they need on all agency Web sites.
Benefits	An effective navigation scheme will: • be easily learned so that your readers don't get lost • remain consistent throughout the Web site • offer alternative choices for navigation • offer clear and understandable labels • support visitors' goals and behaviors

ASSOCIATED ARCHITECTURE LEVELS	
Specify the Domain Name	Interface
Specify the Discipline Name	Branding
Specify the Technology Area Name	Usability
Specify the Product Component Name	

COMPLIANCE COMPONENT TYPE	
Document the Compliance Component Type	Guideline
Component Sub-type	

COMPLIANCE DETAIL	
State the Guideline, Standard or Legislation	**Navigation Guidelines** **1. Use labels that clearly indicate the function of links** Use labels that accurately describe the destination and/or resulting action of links. Avoid using meaningless labels such as "Go" or "Click Here." Instead, enable users to scan and quickly identify links they want to take. Vision impaired users scan for links using screen readers. For this feature to be useful, however, link labels must make sense on their own, or out of context. **2. Provide feedback that tells users where they are in your Web site** Provide visual feedback that responds when users make a selection, and remains dominant until they make a new selection. Good feedback in the design of links includes visual and possibly audio changes that occur in stages.

3. Clearly differentiate navigation elements from one another, but group and place them in a consistent and easy to find place on each page.

Create a common Web site-wide navigational scheme to help users learn and understand the structure of your Web site. Use the same navigation scheme on all pages by consistently locating tabs, headings, lists, search, site map, etc. Locate critical navigation elements in places that will suggest clickability (e.g., lists of words in the left or right panels are generally assumed to be links).
Make navigational elements different enough from one another so that users will be able to understand the difference in their meaning and destination. Grouping reduces the amount of time that users need to locate and identify navigation elements.

* For additional information reference the Interface Domain architecture guidelines for Web page layouts (CC – Layout)

4. Provide persistent links to the homepage and to high-level Web site categories but remember to choose "quality" over "quantity."

Provide links to the home page and high-level Web site categories on every page of your Web site. These persistent links enable users to easily navigate from one area of the Web site to another. Feature these links either in the top banner, bottom banner, or in a left or right panel navigation bar.

Build your navigation so that it 'streams' users into progressively more and more specific information. Users are a lot happier with a few choices (and navigation options) at each level than hundreds. Use subsections and subcategories with appropriate navigation to enable users to quickly locate the specific content they want.

5. Use site maps for Web sites that have many pages.

Site maps provide an overview of the Web site. They may display the hierarchy of the Web site, may be designed to resemble a traditional table of contents, or may be a simple index.

6. Include a "skip to main content" link at the top of each page.

At the top of each page, you must include a "skip to main content" link that allows vision-impaired users with screen readers to avoid listening to navigation links, such as those in the top banner, that repeat on every page. The link should take users to the top of the content section of the page.

The ability to skip navigation items is particularly useful on Web sites that use a top banner and left-side navigation bar. On these Web sites, a link to the main content can save users substantial time.

7. On long Web pages, provide a 'list of contents' with links that take users to the corresponding content farther down the page.

For long pages with several distinct sections that are not visible from the first screenful, add a short, clickable list of the sections (sometimes called 'anchor' links) at the top of the page. 'Anchor links' can serve two purposes: they

provide an outline of the page so users can quickly determine if it contains the desired information, and they allow users to quickly navigate to specific information. Include 'back to top' navigation following each distinct section.

8. Do not create or direct users into pages that have no navigational options.

Many Web pages contain links that open new browser windows. When these browser windows open, the Back button is disabled (in essence, the new browser window knows nothing of the user's past navigation, and thus is disabled). If the new window opens full-screen, users may not realize that they have been redirected to another window, and may become frustrated because they cannot press 'Back' to return to the previous page. If such links are incorporated into a Web site, the newly-opened window should contain a prominent action control that will close the window and return the user to the original browser window.

In addition, designers should not create Web pages that disable the browser's 'Back' button. Disabling the 'Back' button can result in confusion and frustration for users, and drastically inhibits their navigation.

9. Use access keys.

Access keys allow you to access the main navigation elements by using your keyboard. If you are using Windows on a PC, press ALT + access key, then enter/return. If you are using a Macintosh press Control + access key, then enter/return.

Here's an example of how an access key may be coded:

Home

The access key attribute is supported by most major web browsers. Be aware that access keys may override browser defaults.

10. Use tab index.

Tab index is most beneficial for navigating through form fields and hyperlinks by establishing a pre-set order.

Here's an example of how a tab index may be coded:

Home

11. Test the navigation design.

To determine whether users can find information easily, test your navigation design early in the development process. You do not necessarily need all the links to be active or all the pictures to be in place, but you will need the significant navigation mechanisms to be working and some of the content to be placed. Ask representative users to find particular information. In your testing, answer the following questions:

- Do users know how to find the information they need?
- Does your navigation design connect all related information in a sequence

that makes sense to users?
- Do users know where they are in the site structure?
- Do users know how to return to points they visited previously?
- Are there any unnecessary links that clutter the navigation design?

Types of Navigation

There are many possible elements you can use to build your navigation scheme. The most common elements are global navigation, sidebars, breadcrumbs and site maps. Any combination of these can be used.

Global Navigation

Global navigation contains the links to pages that help guide users no matter what page of your site they are on. Good candidates for global navigation links include:
1. your home page
2. site map
3. search page
4. help page
5. jobs page
6. contact information
7. state home page.

All these items are either for general information or help guide the user through your site better.

The most common location for global navigation is under your header, where it will show up with your logo and other branding elements. Alternately, these could be placed in a sidebar or in your footer. The important thing is to be consistent so users will know where to find these links.

Secondary (Sidebar) Navigation

Secondary navigation points the user to different areas of specific interest on your site. For instance, you may have pages for the general public, a section for regulated industries and another section that explains how your agency operates.

Secondary navigation can also be included in a header or footer.

On the state home page, examples of secondary navigation include:
1. Online Services
2. Business
3. Learning

Breadcrumbs

Breadcrumbs are a text-based reference to your site's structure. They show users where they are in the Web site and give a trail for them to follow to get back to a parent section.

Breadcrumbs give users an option to using the back button for navigation and can help some users negotiate your Web site more effectively.

Site Maps

Site maps provide a high-level or top-down view of the Web site. The items

	included in the site map should correspond to the items in the global navigation. If designed well, this overview can include several levels of hierarchy, and yet not so big that users lose their ability to grasp the map as a whole.
Document Source Reference #	Research-based Usability and Design Guidelines – Navigation: http://usability.gov/pdfs/chapter7.pdf IBM Web Design Guidelines – Navigation http://www-3.ibm.com/ibm/easy/eou_ext.nsf/publish/748

Compliance Sources

Name	US Department of Health and Human Services	*Website*	http://usability.gov/
Contact Information			
Name	IBM	*Website*	http://www-3.ibm.com/ibm/easy/eou_ext.nsf/publish/572
Contact Information			

KEYWORDS

List Keywords	Navigation, navigation scheme, site map, navigation design, menu bar, breadcrumbs, global navigation, secondary navigation, tab index, access keys, usability, labels

COMPONENT CLASSIFICATION

Provide the Classification	☐ *Emerging*	☒ *Current*	☐ *Twilight*	☐ *Sunset*
Sunset Date				

COMPONENT SUB-CLASSIFICATION

Sub-Classification	Date	Additional Sub-Classification Information
☐ *Technology Watch*		
☐ *Variance*		
☐ *Conditional Use*		

Rationale for Component Classification

Document the Rationale for Component Classification	

Migration Strategy

Document the Migration Strategy	

Impact Position Statement

Document the Position Statement on Impact	

CURRENT STATUS

Provide the Current Status	☐ *In Development*	☐ *Under Review*	☒ *Approved*	☐ *Rejected*

AUDIT TRAIL

Creation Date	3/2/2005	*Date Approved / Rejected*	9/27/05

Reason for Rejection			
Last Date Reviewed		*Last Date Updated*	
Reason for Update			